

**WEST DES MOINES PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD PROCEEDINGS**  
**Thursday, June 16, 2016**

The meeting of the West Des Moines Parks and Recreation Advisory Board was called to order on Thursday, June 16, at 5:33 p.m. by Heather Schebel.

<b>Commission</b>	Heather Schebel	Rick Swalwell	Forrest Ridgway	Aaron Sewell	Joe Hrdlicka
<b>Present</b>	<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>by phone</b>

  

<b>Staff</b>	Susan Mathews <i>Parks &amp; Recreation Administrative Secretary</i>	Sally Ortgies <i>Superintendent of Parks</i>	Greg Hansen <i>Superintendent of Recreation</i>	Gary Scott <i>Director of Parks &amp; Recreation</i>
<b>Present</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>

**On Item 1. Approval of Agenda**

Scott suggested switching items 5A and 5B with Principal Engineer Ben McAlister present to speak about the Fairmeadows Park Culvert/Stormwater Project.

Ridgway moved to approve the agenda as amended. Hrdlicka seconded. Motion carried.

**On Item 2. Citizen Forum**

No items.

**On Item 3. Approval of Minutes of May 19, 2016 Meeting**

Hrdlicka moved to approve the minutes as presented. Ridgway seconded. Motion carried.

**On Item 4. Old Business**

No items.

**New Business:**

**On Item 5A. Discussion – Fairmeadows Park Culvert/Stormwater Project**

Scott shared that staff have been working with a consultant over the last few months on concept alternatives related to the failing stormwater pipe that is causing sinkholes in the park. Scott stated that one option is to replace the pipe as is and do some grading; the other option is to let the creek be more open in the park by not replacing a section of the pipe. Scott shared that the practice of “daylighting” a creek is a sustainable practice that cleans and slows the flow of water. The addition of a creek would also provide a natural recreational amenity in the park. Principal Engineer Ben McAlister stated that the corrosion of the current pipe is causing sinkholes. He stated that the pipe needs to be replaced and the decision is where the pipe should end. Ridgway asked about the size of the current pipe. McAlister responded it is 72” currently and the proposal is to replace it at the same size or larger. Ridgway asked about potential liability associated with the project. Scott responded that the liability really does not change, kids play at the outlet now. He added that alternative 2 would actually make the water access more visible. The trees that would need to be removed were discussed. Scott added that one of the two sand volleyball courts would also need to be removed or relocated. Schebel inquired about the impact of flooding. McAlister responded that there would be no change, it would only be more visible. Ridgway

expressed that he likes the idea of the natural look of the creek but dislikes losing the volleyball court. Hrdlicka questioned the cost difference in the two alternatives. McAlister responded that alternative 2 is the less expensive option but that the project is paid using stormwater utility fees and therefore does not impact the Parks budget. Ridgway asked about types of plant material that would potentially be used. Ortgies responded that a variety of native grasses and forbs would likely be used and that would also reduce the mowing of an entire embankment. Sewell expressed that he likes the idea of adding a natural feature in a suburban setting. Hrdlicka asked that Board Members be copied on communication with the public in case they receive questions from residents. Ortgies added that staff would be looking into closing the park entirely during the construction. Ridgway asked about the timeline for the project. McAlister responded that they would like to begin around Labor Day and be done by November so new play equipment could be installed in the spring.

#### On Item 5B. Discussion – City Use of Phenix School Gym and Playground

Scott reminded the Board that a year and a half ago the Board voted to approve staff's recommendation to not take over the Phenix Gym and run programs at the site due to the initial and ongoing expenses and the fact that the facility would not meet the primary needs of the department. He added that the Board also moved to approve removal of the three outdoor playgrounds due to their condition and age as well as the location of the two playgrounds in a neighborhood already served by two other neighborhood parks. He reminded the Board that there are some people in the neighborhood who are emotionally attached to one of the playgrounds because there was a fundraising effort to build it. Ridgway asked about the purpose for tonight's discussion. Scott responded that the City received approval for a grant to renovate the property and that the City Council will have a workshop on July 11 to discuss the types of housing that will be built on the site. He added that Sewell was not on the Board at the time of the vote and since it is near his neighborhood it was important to inform and remind everyone in case residents have questions. Sewell inquired if moving the play equipment was discussed as an option. Scott responded that it was discussed and that it was not an option due to the nature of the installation in concrete footings. Ortgies added that it is important to remember that playgrounds do not last forever and that even though there was time and effort spent on raising funds it would still need to be replaced at some point. She added that the City had some play equipment in parks made by the same manufacturer and that there had been issues with the decks that have had to be replaced. Ridgway asked when the playground in question was installed. Scott responded it was installed in 2008 but that the grant required it stay in place until 2030. Ortgies responded that 22 years was not a realistic lifespan for play equipment. Scott added that refunding the grant would be an option to allow removal. Ridgway added that removing it now would eliminate the need to discuss funding replacement. Hrdlicka stated that facilities change over time and that Phenix is no longer a school and that the purpose of the property has changed. Sewell and Ridgway expressed agreement. Ortgies shared that the Historic West Des Moines Master Plan Committee is also considering moving the parking lot access on the east side of the building to the north side to allow an uninterrupted block of residential lots and that would also require eliminating the playground. Scott stated that it might be good for the Chair or a member of the Board to be present at the July 11 City Council workshop in case questions arise.

#### On Item 5C. Discussion – Park Project Financing

Scott presented a list of priority projects obtained through the survey and associated cost estimates. He added that the intention is to create a bundle of projects that serves multiple areas of West Des Moines. Scott stated that a projected budget for operating costs needs to be considered as well. Hrdlicka suggested a PowerPoint format to present the information to City Council visually. Ridgway asked about the goal of the workshop. Scott responded that the backlog of projects is growing and that funds are limited so a referendum is needed. He added that the goal is to have City Council acknowledge there is a need and agree with priority projects and agree to support a referendum. Hrdlicka added that the Board's

role in strategic planning is to advocate for Parks because of their impact on the quality of life in the community. Ridgway added that a feasible timeline for funding alternatives should also be set. Sewell asked about the WestParks Foundation's role as a friends group. Scott stated that would still be a goal in building community support through marketing but it may not be feasible ahead of the referendum being proposed by the City of Des Moines. Scott stated that staff will bring more information in July prior to the August 8 City Council Workshop.

#### Staff Reports:

##### On Item 6A. Superintendent of Parks

Ortgies shared that the site plan for the park space at 39<sup>th</sup> and EP True Parkway will be considered by the Board in July and the public will be invited. The Board previously scheduled an Ice Cream Social for that night but that will need to be moved. She stated that the Holiday Park Baseball Commons Area is being bid and the contract will be awarded July 11. Woodland Hills Park plans are nearly complete and construction will be ordered June 27. Ortgies noted that the Raccoon River Park Softball irrigation improvement project to use water from the lake to irrigate the fields came in way over estimate. She added that the consultant and the low bidder are meeting to look into changes. Ortgies has been investing a lot of time working on a smooth transition of Parks Maintenance functions to Public Works.

##### On Item 6B. Superintendent of Recreation

Hansen stated that summer programs are underway and that Aquatic Centers revenue is at about a 35% increase from this time last year. Ridgway asked about the cause of the cloudy water the first day of operation. Hansen stated that Clive had the same issue and that although a clear reason is unknown potential causes are that the use was near capacity and there could be an impact of spray sunscreen products in the water.

##### On Item 6C. Director of Parks and Recreation

Scott shared with the Board that a knife was confiscated from the bag of a young person at Holiday Park Aquatic Center due to a report from another young person. He added that no threats were made and that it was turned over willingly. Scott stated that staff investigated alternative sites for the proposed celltower. The site at Jordan Creek Park at 50<sup>th</sup> Street would be much more visible and would impact recreational space. The space at 39<sup>th</sup> and EP True Parkway where a tower would not violate the agreement with MidAmerican would put residential and commercial property within the fall zone of the tower. Scott stated that the Board of Adjustment met and moved to approve the originally proposed site. The lease is still being negotiated. Scott shared that a letter was received from a resident regarding pickleball and why pickleball lines are not painted on every basketball court. Scott responded that there has been very little feedback on interest in having additional courts. Currently there are pickleball lines on the tennis court at Jaycee Park and there is a league at the Valley Community Center. Scott shared that he and the City Manager met with the Central Iowa Aquatics Club who would like to partially fund an inflatable dome and associated operating costs to cover the lap pool at Valley View to allow use for practices, meets and public use from approximately Labor Day to Memorial Day. Scott added that staff will conduct due diligence on all the details. Similarly staff will be meeting with representatives from the Iowa Wild who want to partner with West Des Moines in creating a temporary outdoor ice rink. Scott has formed a list of items to work on accomplishing during his final months with the City. Scott stated that the City Manager will do an open search for a new Parks & Recreation Director and Parks Superintendent Sally Ortgies will serve as interim Director and will be applying for the permanent position.

On Item 7. Other Matters

Staff and Board members agreed to reschedule the Wild Rose Ice Cream Social to Tuesday, August 2.

Receive, File and/or Refer:

On Item 8A. City Council Communications

May 31, 2016: Resolution – Accept Work – Holiday Park Baseball Improvements – Phase 3

June 13, 2016: Public Hearing – Raccoon River Park Softball Complex Irrigation Modifications – City  
Initiated: 1. Resolution – Approval of Plans and Specifications; 2. Motion – Receive and File  
Report of Bids; 3. Motion – Defer Award of Contract

June 13, 2016: Resolution – Order Construction and Notice of Public Hearing on Plans, Specifications,  
Form of Contract, Estimate of Cost, and Direct Advertisement of Bids – Holiday Park Baseball  
Field Improvements – Phase 4A Commons Area

Hrdlicka moved to adjourn. Ridgway seconded. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 7:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Susan Mathews  
Administrative Secretary

ATTEST:

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Aaron Sewell  
Advisory Board Secretary